

# CURRENT TOPICS

**A**N INTERESTING CASE IS ABOUT TO COME to trial before the federal court in Boston. Referring to this case, the Chicago Tribune says that before it is finished it may involve the inside history of the Porto Rican campaign and make revelations which will interest the whole country. The case is briefly this: Senor Mateo Tagado of Mayaguez, the richest planter and one of the most influential citizens of Porto Rico, brings suit for libel against P. G. Badger & Co., publishers, of Boston, on account of certain statements in a book issued by them purporting to lay bare inner secrets of the Porto Rican campaign and also making some startling assertions about Senor Tagado. The book in question was written by Karl Stephen Herrman of New York, one of Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and at one time editor of the Smart Set. Some of the most brilliant lawyers in Boston have been retained on both sides. The defense has summoned numerous witnesses, among them General Nelson A. Miles, General Theodore Schwann, ex-Secretary Alger, ex-Governor Charles H. Allen, and Governor Hunt of Porto Rico. The plaintiff also has summoned a long list of Americans and Porto Ricans. The case has been pending over two years, but has only now been reached, owing to the crowded state of the docket. The prominence of the principals to the suit and the high station of most of the witnesses invest the case with extraordinary interest, besides which there is the possibility of a decided sensation, if, as is expected, the inside history of the Porto Rican campaign becomes a feature of the testimony.

**T**HE RECIPIENT OF A UNIQUE SENTENCE at the hands of Judge Adams of the United States circuit court at St. Louis is John Fickler. Fickler was convicted of robbing a mail carrier. The penalties for the offenses of which Fickler was shown to be guilty are ten years at hard labor for robbing the mail by intimidating the carrier, imprisonment for life at hard labor for robbing the registered mail by placing the life of the carrier in jeopardy by the use of dangerous weapons, and ten years' imprisonment at hard labor for robbing the mail by intimidating the carrier. Judge Adams sentenced Fickler to imprisonment for life and then gave him two sentences of ten years each. Fickler is in the impossible position of being required to serve first a life sentence and then twenty years in addition thereto.

**T**HE VICAR OF CLERKENWELL, A PARISH in London, has announced that in future he will have his church darkened during services, hymns and prayers to be thrown on a screen with a magic lantern. There are many poor people in Dr. Parker's congregation and he says that he has discovered that a number of them remain away from service because they hesitate to compare their "Sunday best" with the elegant garments of well-to-do members. Dr. Parker thinks that when his new plan is in operation many people who have heretofore absented themselves from service will attend. Reverend James S. Stone, rector of the St. James Episcopal church in Chicago, does not approve of Dr. Parker's plan. One objection offered by Mr. Stone is that "the darkened church will put people to sleep." Mr. Stone thinks that the remedy is to be found in a cultivation among well-to-do people of the habit of dressing modestly for church.

**T**HERAPEUTIC PHOTOGRAPHY IS THE name given by a Paris physician to a process for the examination of patients suffering from hallucinations. The Paris correspondent of the New York American presents the story. The name of the doctor is Hippolyte Boradue. According to the American correspondent, Dr. Boradue holds near his subject a dry plate wrapped up in light paper—proof paper. If the patient is suffering from melancholia it is impressed upon the plate, showing as a whirlwind of lines. The opposite emotion, of joy, appears upon the plate in flashes like Roentgen rays. Dr. Boradue claims to have recorded photographically the purr of a cat and the coo of a pigeon, but his boldest claim is that of his ability to take photographs of persons resembling crayon portraits, minus the

hard lines, by light projected solely by the concentration of thought by the subject.

**A** RESIDENT OF QUINCY, MASS., WILLIAM Hatch by name, has invented what he says will prove to be a substitute for coal. This material is weed taken from the beaches, eel grass and rock, weed mixed with clay and subjected to a process, the secret of which is locked up within the Hatch breast. Mr. Hatch says that he can produce this "coal" and make money on it by selling it for \$2 a ton.

**T**HERE IS DANGER OF THE ELEPHANT BECOMING extinct and the authorities of the Congo Free State are taking measures to prevent the slaughter of these animals in their domain. It is said that unless some check is placed upon the slaughter of elephants, the species will become extinct in the Free State within eight or ten years.

**P**OPULAR SENTIMENT IN PEKIN IS VOICED in a memorial addressed to the dowager empress by the censors asking her to retire in favor of the emperor. In this memorial it is stated that the retirement of the dowager empress will be the first step in the direction of reform and it is made plain that it is a very essential step.

**A** MAN WHO INSISTS THAT HE IS A SCIENTIST has informed the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that he has counted the hairs of the human head. The results of these investigations are stated as follows: "Blondes, for instance, have the greatest number, and those with red hair the smallest. In no case is there much variation between the sexes when the color is the same. Light-haired people have between 140,000 and 165,000 hairs. Brunettes average only about 105,000 hairs. Red-haired people do not have much more than 30,000. This means that red hair is coarser than other shades, but it has the advantage of lasting longer."

**A** PROFESSOR AT YALE, J. L. WORTMAN, has been making investigation and announces that he has discovered that animal life originated in the Arctic region rather than in the tropics. Professor Wortman spent several months in Wyoming investigating the fossil monkeys and apes. He says that these apes lived in the eocene period and were similar to the apes of Europe of that period. The professor explains: "These facts are pregnant with meaning and can be explained only on the hypothesis that there was a common center from which these plants and animals were distributed. Considering further that the present continental masses were essentially the same in the eocene time as now, and the north polar region then enjoyed a sub-tropical climate, as is abundantly proved by fossil plants, we are forced to the conclusion that this common center of dispersion lay approximately within the arctic circle."

**T**HAT THE POWERS WILL ADOPT THE lead of the United States and let China down as easily as possible is the view taken by Public Opinion with respect to the dispute over the payment of the Chinese indemnity. It is said that "China owes the powers an indemnity of nearly eleven million taels, a tael being worth seventy-four cents in gold at the time the indemnity was agreed upon. It is now worth about sixty-two cents in gold, and China wishes to pay at this rate which would decrease the net amount received by the powers by over a million dollars. The treaty of 1901 says that the indemnity is a 'gold debt,' but it does not say anything about the rate of exchange, and China may be excused for taking advantage of the existing rate if it is more favorable to her than the rate prevailing at the time the treaty was made."

**T**HAT THE YEAR 1902 WAS A FORTUNATE one for presidents, kings and emperors, not one death of a national ruler or president having been chronicled during that period, is an interesting fact pointed out by a writer in the New York World. This writer says: "President Loubet of France was lucky enough last August to

escape the bullet of an assassin while walking in Rambouillet Forest. The nearly fatal illness of Queen Wilhelmina of Holland last April, when she wavered between life and death for days; the equally dangerous sickness of King Edward of England, which rendered it exceedingly doubtful for a time as to whether or not he would be crowned, and the narrow escape of King Leopold of Belgium from assassination at Biarritz last April, all bear witness to the fact that the lucky stars of European monarchs must have been in the ascendant during the past twelve months."

**T**HE SAME AUTHORITY REMINDS US THAT the year 1901 was a most unfortunate one for presidents and monarchs as the following list of deaths will show: Queen Victoria of Great Britain, died January 22, 1901. Milan, ex-king of Serbia, died February 11, 1901. Ex-President Benjamin Harrison, died March 13, 1901. Empress Victoria of Germany, died August 5, 1901. President William McKinley, died September 14, 1901. Abdurrahman Khan, amir of Afghanistan, died October 3, 1901. To this list may be added Li Hung Chang, the greatest man of his generation in the Chinese empire, who died November 7, 1901, in Pekin, and Count Bismarck, the "Man of Blood and Iron," of Germany, who died May 30, 1901. Crispi, premier of Italy, and Hohenlohe, chancellor of Germany, also died in that year of many fatalities—1901.

**A**N INTERESTING SIGHT WAS PRESENTED to pedestrians on the streets of New York recently. The officers of the Hanover National bank were engaged in moving their offices from Wall and New streets to the new building at Nassau and Pine. The bank clerks and messengers, all carrying more than \$60,000,000 in gold, greenbacks and securities, were linked together with a stout chain and marched through the streets with their precious burdens attended by a platoon of police.

**T**HE RACE QUESTION HAS BROKEN OUT IN a New York Sunday school, where a class of white girls have rebelled against the attendance of a colored girl, the white children refusing to sit with her. Here is an opportunity for Mr. Roosevelt to write a letter to some "prominent citizen" of New York. Undoubtedly such a communication would be read with great interest by a certain "prominent citizen" at Charleston, S. C.

**I**T IS REPORTED THAT THE NUMBER OF child tramps in England, most of them being children of tramps, has recently increased, and for the purpose of coping with the situation, the clerk of the Bridgeport board of guardians has drawn up a plan for the treatment of vagrants. The chief feature of the plan is presented by Public Opinion in this way: "Every person leaving home for the purpose of obtaining work must obtain from the police a certificate, stating his age, trade, whether single or married, number of children, and proposed route. Upon production of such certificate such person and family shall be received into tramp wards and allowed to depart next morning without task. Any tramp presenting himself or herself at any tramp ward, or found by the police, shall be apprehended, and unless he or she can prove that they are not habitual tramps, and are earning their living in a legitimate way, shall be liable to imprisonment in a labor institution for varying terms, according to the number of previous convictions, the limit being twelve months, after the third conviction. Upon the second conviction of parent the children may be removed to a state school and detained until sixteen years of age, at the expense of the state."

**T**HE HEIRS OF WAGNER, THE GREAT COMPOSER, received during 1902 the sum of \$115,000 in royalties from Wagner's operas. "Lohengrin," which is said to be the most popular of Wagner's operas, brought \$68,000 royalty during the year. "Tannhauser" brought \$32,750.

**A** NOVEL CONVENTION IS TO BE HELD next year. According to the Frankfort, Germany, correspondent of the Chicago Tribune this will be known as the "international earthquake